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In Search of a Better Life: Paperwork on Reshuffles in Church Institutions in the Second Half of the 18th - Early 20th Century: A Case-Study of the Tobolsk Spiritual Consistory

Abstract

The article studies reasons for moving employees and ministers of ecclesiastical institutions of the Tobolsk diocese in the second half of the 18th – early 20th century and analyses the procedure of the reshuffles. This topic has not been studied yet, it is here disclosed on basis of archival sources that are being introduced into scientific use. The author has studied files of the Tobolsk spiritual consistory stored in the State Archive in the city of Tobolsk. The article reveals content of these cases, examines documents on reshuffles of ministers of church institutions of the Tobolsk diocese. The author determines terms, on which the record keeping procedure

depended, identifies its main stages, isolates initiating documents in the files. The most frequent reason for the displacement of church institutions officials and ministers was their inability to support themselves and their families on the salary. When ecclesiastical consistory needed clerical workers, the diocesan authorities preferred to transfer experienced employees from other church institutions, rather than to accept graduates from educational institutions where they were taught nothing of office work. Moreover, most graduates preferred the civil service to the spiritual, so there was a lack of clerical workers, and sometimes freelancer clerks were to be hired. The documents interesting not for dry statement of facts, but for remarks and reflections that are often emotionally colored. The archival documents show that the Russian Orthodox Church took care of all of its servants, even those disabled, in ill health or elderly and found opportunity to find them all a suitable position within their power.

Keywords

Historical sources, Russian Orthodox Church, Tobolsk diocese, Tobolsk Religious Consistory, clergymen, employees of ecclesiastical institutions, personnel reshuffles, clerical work.

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